9th Sermon

A Word in Season:

BEING A

SERMON

PREACH'D

In the Pariſh-Church of St. *James Clarkenwell*, on *Wedneſday* the 11*th.* of *December*, 1695.

Being the

Faſt-Day.

By *D. Pead*, Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of *Newcaſtle.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Roger Clavel*, over againſt St. *Dunſtans*-Church *Fleet-ſtreet*, 1695.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Fast-Day.

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Printed for Roger Clavel, over against St. Dunstans-Church Fleet-street, 1695.

ISAIAH XXX. *Ver.* 1.

Wo to the Rebellious Children, ſaith the Lord, that take Counſel, but not of Me, and that cover with a Covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add Sin to Sin.

THUS ſtood the caſe of the *Jews* at the time of this Prophecy; *Sennacherib* (or by Interpretation the Bramble of deſtruction) had threatned to Invade the Land of *Judah* with a Strong and Potent Army: Theſe ſad Tydings did fill the *Jews* with ſo great Conſternation, as both diſpirited their Men of War, and diſtracted the Counſels of the Ancients; inſomuch as many concluded their beſt expedient was to comply with the *Aſſyrians*; and theſe practiſed under-

hand

hand to betray all unto the Enemy; nay, ſo far had their Fear tranſported them, that the better (as they thought) to commend themſelves to the favour of the Conquerour, they had already reſolved to eſpouſe as well his Religion as his Language: Others more ſteadfaſt to their God and faithful to their Country, could not, nor would not with ſo great Sacrifices endeavour the appeaſing of the Tyrant's Wrath. However, theſe held it neceſſary to diſpatch an Embaſſy to *Egypt* for Aid; theſe inſtead of ſeeking to the Lord their God to cover them from the Fury, Rage, and Inſults of *Aſſyria*, have recourſe to *Pharaoh*, and by this means (as ſaith the Prophet) they added *Sin to Sin*; that is, to their firſt ſin of forſaking God, and not entreating Counſel and Strength of him, they added the other, of truſting in the Arm of Fleſh: Againſt both theſe the Royal Prophet came arm'd with a terrible denunciation of Woe, as you read in the Text.

Our Preſent Circumſtances in part reſemble theirs; we are threatned by another *Sennacharib*, a Tyrant Ill-bred and Ill-conditioned, a very Bramble that creeps and ſpreads it ſelf, if poſſible

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to pull down or at leaſt hinder the growth of his betters; a very Bramble, good for little but burning; his threatnings are Bold and therefore to weak hearts Terrible, inſomuch as ſome among us (though called *Chriſtians*) are turned very *Jews*, and would if they could through their unaccountable fear (it being impoſſible they ſhould do it from a Principle of Love) betray all into his hands, theſe have already gone ſo far as beyond their own Language and Religion to meet him.

Others among us ſtrengthen themſelves only in the *Confederacy*, theſe are ſuch as have ever walked frowardly with God, that have under-hand, if not openly, endeavoured to throw down his Alter, to corrupt the Truth, to ridicule all pure Religion; and therefore cannot in this Exigency have any great heart to put their Confidence in the Living God: They have wore a Form of Religion for a diſguiſe, but that is no encouragement to believe that the Righteous God ſhould now cover them, they have often made it their mock, and therefore cannot reaſonably hope it will now be their Sanctuary. Though we have

in theſe things equall'd, if not outdone the *Jews*; yet thanks be to God, the moſt of us are better adviſed, and inſtead of either betraying our ſelves to the Enemy or relying upon our ſuppoſed Friend in *Egypt*, we are this day met (as other Congregations in other Places) to ſeek unto God for his bleſſing upon the Conſultations of this preſent Parliament; and I am of that Faith, that if in this we are ſincere, we ſhall ſtill eat the good of the Land, we ſhall notwithſtanding all this noiſe and rumour quietly Praiſe God under our own *Vines*, and under our own *Figg-trees*, and there ſhall be none to make us afraid.

If we muſter up Legions of Devout, Humble and Fervent Prayers, We may once again hear of Proud *Sennacherib*'s Army deſtroyed by an *Angel*, 1 *Kings* 19. 35, 37. If not of himſelf falling a ſacrifice to his Son's Ambition; or his Kingdom's Safety.

That which is commended to our obſervation belief and practice, from this reproof of the Prophet, is,

It is the Wiſdom, Duty and Intereſt of every Kingdom and Nation, knowing and owning the

true God, in all their ſtraits and difficulties, in all their fears and dangers to ſeek unto him for Counſell and Aid.

Should we in this be negligent or refractory, the diligence of *Heathens* and *Idolaters* would condemn us, for they in perillous times ſought to ſtocks and ſtones; nay, to the very Devils whom they own'd and worſhipped.

So zealous in this point was *Scipio Africanus*, that it is Recorded of him, How that early before the Morning watch he uſed to go into the *Capitol, in cellam Jovis*, to the Chancel of *Jupiter*, and there made a conſiderable ſtay, *quaſi conſultans de Re Publica cum* Jove, as being in conſultation with his God about the difficult affairs of his Kingdom.

And thus *Iſaiah* telleth us of the Idolaters in his time, how that in their troubles they ſought unto them that had familiar Spirits, and unto Wizards; theſe they accounted as the immediate Servants of their God, *viz. Baal:* And this their doing they juſtifie; ſaying, *Should not a People ſeek unto their God?* Iſai. 8. 19. Wherefore have they a God if in ſuch Perilous times they ſeek not unto him?

Thus did *David*, *Joſias*, *Jehoſaphat* and *Hezekiah*; they ſought to God in the days of their trouble and danger, and if any ſhall anſwer, the manner of our Kingdom is not as was that of the *Jews*: If it be not yet, what hinders but our Devotion ought to be as true and fervent, if not more than theirs?

St. *Jude* Propheſy'd, that in the latter days there ſhould come Scoffers, and behold they are come; for how do ſome flout and ridicule the Parliament, barely becauſe they ſo earneſtly deſire that their meeting might be made Auſpicious by the Prayers of the Nation; this ſome have the face to repreſent as a meer piece of Pageantry, others deride it as frivilous and unneceſſary. As to the firſt, how they ſhould ſo well know the minds of others, I ſee not, except it be by judging them by the model of their own; as to the other, that would ſuperſede their requeſt herein, as being needleſs.

I wouldprefer this to conſider on; is it not proper and expedient for Religious, Wiſe and Conſcientious Perſons having the cares, fears and hopes of Three Kingdoms depending on their de-

debates to desire the help of Publick Prayers! What though Praying hath been sometime the Preface to bad Purposes, doth it therefore follow that it must not be to good? This were all one as to tell us, some wicked Persons have been known to Pray when they went about their mischievous Designs, and therefore an Honourable Assembly of Christians, who have the Glory of Almighty God, the Preservation of a Great and Noble King, the Good and Peace of Church and State; the Safety and Welfare of many Thousands, together with their Posterity and Country before them, should not desire and beg the Divine Assistance to their Consultations: In short, whoever is against our Praying this day, and upon this occasion, are no well wishers to Prosperity any day.

We are this day called together to pray for Gods Blessing upon the Consultations of the present Parliament, and I know not the minds of others, but according to the best of my judgment from this action, these following thoughts must necessarily offer themselves to your minds.

First, The Prevalency and Advantage of a good

and Pious Example is herein very apparent.

Theodorick King of the *Goths* inform'd the *Roman Senate*, *Facilius esse errare naturam, quam dissimilem sui Principem Rem Publicam formare*; that Subjects did commonly comport themselves suitably to the Copy their Sovereign set before them; so that the Prince who desired successfully to commend Piety to his People, must do it by virtue of his own practice:

In the Spring our King Solicited the Prayers of his People, as knowing that God was the Lord of Hosts; and now in Fall the Parliament request your Prayers, as knowing that our God is the God and giver of Wisdom.

Secondly, From this days Fasting and Praying we may collect and be satisfied in the Wisdom of the Parliament.

If *Solomon*'s Rule be true, *That the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom*; How wise are they who will not begin their weighty Affairs till they have Invocated his Blessing and Assistance: It were unreasonable to expect the Blessing they sought not, and as weak to believe their Consultations should be effectual if they were unblest.

They are not like the *Jews* for sending an Embassy to *Egypt*, but for sending one to Heaven, and therefore have ordred the concurrence of your Prayers with their own, that thus joyntly wrestling with the God of Mercy, you may obtain a blessing.

Our Saviour while in the flesh, undertook no extraordinary work without Prayer; and accordingly by Practice as well as Precept he commended this great duty to his Followers, while others therefore question, let us gratefully acknowledge their Wisdom, who in this act of Devotion, not only Imitate their Lord and Master, but also look up unto him, *as the Author and Finisher of their Salvation*; as well Temporal as Spiritual.

Thirdly, That we are this day met in the house of God by Prayer and Fasting, to Supplicate a blessing upon the Consultations of the present Parliament (this being the effect of their Address) demonstrates their Humility; no Impartial person can think otherwise than that the flower of the nation for Learning, Wisdom and Experience, are now in conjunction, yet are they persons of that exemplary and admirable Modesty, as they will not tolerate Self-confidence, and I may say, such is their Piety that they have learnt from the Spirit of God, not to lean on their own understanding, *Prov.* 3. 5. 6.

5, 6. They deſire to acknowledge God in all their ways, and therefore invocate him, and no doubt will Proſper the better for it.

The greater ſubmiſſion the more Grace, *God reſiſteth the Proud*, he oppoſeth the ſtrength, and infatuates the wit in which they confide, *but ever giveth grace to the humble.*

They neither preſume nor Glory in their own Abilities nor do they deſie their Enemies upon the Imagination of what themſelves can do, though their power be truly great, but you ſee their intentions are to meet them, and their dark deſigns in the Name of the God of *Iſrael*: they will like *Hezekiah*, *Iſa.* 37. 41, 15. Firſt repair to God, and by Prayer and Humiliation endeavour the Appeaſing his Wrath, and then Provid againſt the threatnings of the Enemy; they will take care to humble themſelves before him who they believe will in due time exalt them. If they deſie their Enemies, it is not becauſe the Judgments of God are far above out of their ſight; but becauſe in this act of Devotion, God is in their ſight, his Goodneſs and Love, his Wiſdom and Power, his Truth and Mercy are before their Eyes: The God of Truth hath ſaid it, *That he dwelleth with him that is of a Contrite and Humble Spirit*, Iſa. 57. 15. *To revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the*

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Contrite one; if he therefore dwelleth with one such, we may well hope he will not withdraw his comforting and cherishing presence from a whole body of the same gracious temper.

Fourthly, That we are at this time called together to offer up our humble and hearty Prayers, that God would be Gracious unto, and bless the great Assembly of Parliament, argues likewise the Piety and sincerity of them that promoted this days meeting.

It is on argument they are not gathered together against the Lord, nor against his Anointed; for then had it been unpardonable Impudence to have Expected the Benediction of the Righteous God, who is the great and best preserver of Religious Kings and Princes.

Jeroboam who had been false with God, was driven more out of necessity than love to seek unto God in behalf of his sick Son, but being Conscious of his own Hypocrisie, observe his manner and way of seeking, 1 *Kings* 14. 2. *He dispatcht his Wife upon his Errand for privacy*, and to be yet more private, she must go in a disguise. And thanks be to God, we may well believe they who have this day put us upon seeking unto God, have hearts right towards God, they love him, they love his worship, they love the Government, they love the People; they really affect and

desire

desire our good, or otherwise it had been no good policy to call a good God to their Council.

Time has been that Persons have strove hard and spent much to be chosen for the Service of their Countrey in Parliament, but what Hearts did many of them come with? The same as the *Romans* of old went to their Governments, with, *Tanquam ad aureos messem*, as to a golden and profitable, not a painful and laborious Harvest.

Too many accounted the house no other, than Danae's Tower, for if sitting there *Jupiter* did not dissolve himself and Kingdoms upon them in Golden showers, his true service and interest seldom enter'd their breasts.

They came its true upon their Summons, but wherefore, only in hopes to return like so many *Jasons*, with every one a Golden *Fleece*, but now we hear other things, now you are by them desired to pray that God would inspire them from above, that they may wisely, unanimously and cordially consult what is best for God and their Kings Honour, for their own and Countries good and safety: Blessed are our Ears that hear these things; hard our hearts if we believe them not, and dull our Souls if we pray not that they may in due time be fulfilled.

They

Tho I acknowledg the true Love of God to be the propereſt and ſweeteſt Inducement unto Prayer, yet I alſo obſerve, that many are Strangers to this Love, and that the Spirit of their Devotion is barely Fear or Hope: So that their Prayers, properly ſpeaking, are owing to their Intereſt and Advantage; they find that God is the God of their Mercies, and therefore they reſolve that he ſhall be the God of their Prayers as well as Praiſes. Were not God bountiful and gracious, and were not we poor Mortals ſubject to Want and Neceſſities, Heaven would not be ſtormed by ſo many Prayers as it is. I therefore undertook to repreſent the Nation's hopes as reaſonable from this Seſſions of Parliament as I poſſibly could, that the People might the more generally, frequently, willingly and fervently mind it in their Supplications.

Having therefore diſpatch'd this, and I hope both ſhown the occaſion and reaſon of praying, and likewiſe ſtir'd up ſome Deſire and Propenſity in your Mind to pray, I now proceed to direct you,

Firſt, What to pray for.

Secondly, Why we ſhould pray for theſe things.

Thirdly, To what end and purpoſe we ſhould beg theſe things.

In the firſt place, in the ſubject Matter of your Prayer, I hold it neceſſary that we,

1. Be inſtant and urgent with God now in the Church, and anon in our Cloſets, to pity this ſinful Nation with the Grace of Repentance; that we turning from our Sins, he may let go his Diſpleaſure.

Whoſo ſhall tell you this Advice is not ſeaſonable and neceſſary, muſt ſpeak againſt his Knowledg; and he that perſwades you to hope for God's Bleſſing before you repent, encourages you to hope againſt your Belief.

Amſterdam is reported to be a Medley of Religion; and to ſpeak without Flattery, *London* may properly be termed a Sink of Sin. Have we not amongſt us the Senſuality of the old World, the Luſt of *Sodom*, the Cruelty of *Egypt*, the Careleſneſs and Security of *Laiſh*, the Drunkenneſs of *Perſia*, the Stallions of *Jeruſalem*, the Idolatry of *Babylon*, the Infidelity of *Bethſaida* and *Chorazin*, the Pride of *Capernaum*, the impertinent Curioſity of *Athens*, the Flattery of *Zidon*, the Lying of *Greece*, and the Lukewarmneſs of *Laodicea*?

Is it not easy to find a bloody *Cain*, an oppressing *Nimrod*, a complying *Aaron*, a revengeful *Simeon*, an over-indulgent *Eli*, a massacring *Haman*, a deceitful and treacherous *Joab*, a blaspheming *Rabshekah*? Have we not *David*'s Liars, who as soon as they are born, go astray, speaking Lies? Have we not his Cursers, who clothe themselves with Cursing as with a Garment? Have we not his false Hearts, whose Flatteries are smoother than Oil, whose Calumniations are sharper than a two-edged Sword? Have we not his Courtiers who eat at his Table, are free to his Chappel, and yet lift up their heel against him? Have we not his Fools, who say in their heart, there is no God? Nay, we have greater, who in Print declare the Son of God was no Saviour!

Have we not *Ephraim*'s Drunkards, the Scribes false Witnesses, St. *Paul*'s Assassines? Have we not a *Demetrius* to roar out for *Diana*? a *Demetrius* to obstruct the preaching of the Truth? Have we not a covetous *Simon*, and an Apostatizing *Demas*? How many amongst us neither fear God, nor regard Man? These and many more are the Sins of this Age and Place; I know many Graces but no Sin that we want, and if we did, it would soon be brought on the Stage.

But when we look upon theſe Sins with reſpect to their Circumſtances, O wretched Nation, who ſhall deliver thee! Our Sins are aggrandiz'd in that they are committed not for want of a Law, or a Law explain'd, for we ſin againſt the Law of Nature implanted in our Minds, againſt the Law of God and the wholſome Laws of the Land; our Sins bid Defiance not only to the Light of Reaſon, but to the glorious Light of the Goſpel; we ſin in Contempt of the Miniſtery of God's Word which is ſo plentiful amongſt us: We ſin with an high hand, for we ſin againſt the Principles of our Religion, againſt our Baptiſmal Vow, againſt the Stirrings of the Spirit of Grace, againſt the Reproofs of God's Word, and the painful Gripes of our Conſciences; our Sins have been committed againſt Mercies and Judgments, againſt Warnings, Calls, Promiſes and Profeſſion of Repentance and Reformation.

Now is it not high time for God to be avenged on ſuch a Nation as ours, to eaſe himſelf of ſuch grand Enemies and notorious Rebels? It would further encreaſe our Guilt, to believe that ever God would hear ſuch Sinners before they repent them of their Wickedneſs; thus to believe, were all one as to ſuppoſe God to be ſuch an one as our ſelves: Let us there-

therefore implore God first to bless us, in turning every one of us from our Sins, before ever we dare to expect he should favour our Affairs: If we will continue in the way of the Ungodly, we must believe nothing will prosper.

We must either believe that there is no Knowledg in God, that he neither knows nor regards our Doings, or else that he is departed from Justice, if ever his Blessings light upon us while we continue in our Sins. How is it possible God should guide us with his Eye, when he cannot behold us? for he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity with Approbation. How vain is it to hope that God will stretch forth his hand to work our Deliverance, when we still put forth our hands unto Wickedness! We may cry when our Calamities overtake us; but God will not regard their Prayers who entertain Wickedness in their hearts.

We are plainly told (I wish we had the Grace to believe it) that our Sins withhold good things from us, *Jer.* 5. 25. And if we are not speedy in our Repentance, I fear, amongst the rest of good things, our Sins will withhold and keep back God's Blessing from the great Assembly of the Nation.

God

God hath ſaid it, *Pſal.* 33. 10. *The Lord bringeth the Counſel of the Heathen to nought*: And what are wicked Chriſtians better than Heathens! and he maketh the Devices of ſuch People of none Effect.

We read a notable Inſtance how God bloweth upon the Counſel of his Enemies: He leadeth, as *Job* ſaith, ſuch Counſellors away ſpoiled, and their Counſel is carried headlong, it is too raſh and haſty. *Iſa.* 8. 10. God there ſpeaks to the wicked *Aſſyrians* coming againſt his People, *Take Counſel together, and it ſhall come nought; ſpeak the word, and it ſhall not ſtand.* He let them aſſemble, he ſuffered them to conſult, but all to no purpoſe: wanting his Bleſſing they were as they that had neither Strength nor Underſtanding. God often turneth the Counſel as well as the Sword of wicked Men againſt themſelves, *Job* 18.7. he maketh their own Counſel to caſt them down: and this God does either when he leaves Men to their own Counſels, ſuſpending his Light, and then they fall into thouſands of Errors; then the more their Wit, the greater their Parts, the more inevitable their Ruine: Or elſe he cauſes their Counſels to caſt them down, by turning the Hearts of the People againſt their Advice. A notorious Inſtance of fruſtrating Human Counſel we had the

laſt

last Reign; we may be so sensible of it as to tell it to our Childrens Children, that it may be had in everlasting Remembrance.

Thus having endeavour'd to remove the grand Obstruction of our Impenitence and want of Reformation, give me leave to refresh your Mind with what I hope the first Lesson for this Morning's Service hath imprinted, *Isa.* 1. you find God promised by his Spirit of Grace, *v.* 25. to purge them purely from their Dross and their Tin; by sanctified Chastisements and Afflictions he would bring them out of Love with their Corruptions and Vices, he would reform their Manners, and enliven their Devotions, freeing the one from Hypocrisy, and the other from Sin and Wickedness: And then, *ver.* 26. *I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness, the faithful City.* Had we no farther Good to expect than upright Judges and faithful Counsellors, yet 'twere worth our Repentance to obtain these. Now then, if the present Consultations succeed not, we know where justly to lay the Blame, not on the great Council, but in the great Sins, and greater Impenitence of the Nation: But I hope better things of you, that you are perswaded, and

that

that God will by his holy Spirit aſſiſt you in the great Work of Repentance, ſo that you will cry and pray unto God heartily, that you will wreſtle with God for publick and private Pardon. Thus you have ſeen the firſt thing you ought to requeſt of God, Grace to repent and reform; you have alſo ſeen the Reaſon, becauſe till then it is but Folly to expect a Bleſſing.

2. The ſecond thing you are at this and other times to beg of God for the great Council of our Nation, is Counſel.

We muſt pray that God would counſel our Counſellors, and give our Senators Wiſdom: And that none may excuſe the non-performance of this Duty by pretending Unskilfulneſs, I ſhall ſhew them where they may collect an excellent form of Prayer ſutable for this occaſion, it is ſhort but comprehenſive, *viz. Pſal.* 32. 8. Lord, inſtruct them in the way they ſhould go, and guide them with thine Eye, then will their Conſultations be both ſound for the Matter, right for the Way, and juſtifiable by the End.

For this we ſhould pray,

1. Becauſe Counſel is expedient and proper for their preſent Occaſions. The Affairs that require

their

their Inſpection and Advice are many and great, weighty and intricate, it is no ſuch eaſy matter to perſwade an untoward Generation to better Manners. The purging away the Dregs of Popery and Socinianiſm is not ſo ſoon accompliſhed, the Stain of Superſtition, Idolatry and Error are not lightly waſhed away; and if there be not that appearance of drowning in a Gulph of Popery, yet the Floods of Socinianiſm come on apace and riſe high: ſmall matters will not revive decay'd Piety, nor ſubdue ſtubborn and daring Vice, it is a difficult Province to keep fantaſtical Subjects in due Obedience. How hard is it to ſtretch the Sinews of War farther when they are even now ready to break? How wiſe ought they to be who would find out what thing with Wings betray'd our Ships at Sea? A few bare Wiſhes will not recover our Peace, compoſe our Diviſions, nor unite Mens Affections: And when ſuch extraordinary Long-ſuffering and Clemency of the Government will not reclaim Men of perverſe Principles, it will deſerve ſome Conſultation by what Methods of Juſtice they may be reduc'd, or at leaſt prevented in their malicious Intentions. Theſe and many more Particulars that want Redreſs, may make you ſenſible what neceſſity there is to pray for Counſel;

it were not therefore amiſs that we all pray'd this day, to morrow, and every day, that God would bleſs the Conſultations of the Parliament.

The wiſe Man aſſures us from his own Experience, that had we nothing elſe to condole or dread, to look for or prepare againſt, yet the very War wherein we are ſo much concern'd requires more than ordinary Counſel, *Prov.* 11. 14. Counſel and Strength are neceſſary for the War: for in a War with ambitious and bloody, with cruel and barbarous, with falſe and perfidious Enemies, whoſe Power is not eaſily reſiſted, and whoſe Faith is not to be credited, we have need of able Counſellors.

Hear we him again, *Prov.* 15. 22. *Without Counſel Purpoſes are diſappointed; but in the multitude of Counſellours they are eſtabliſhed.* So again, *Prov.* 20. 18. *Every Purpoſe is eſtabliſhed by Counſel.* Wiſe and faithful Counſellours ſit at the Helm like Pilots guiding the Ship, ſo that it may paſs with Eaſe through the rougheſt Waves, and with Safety by the threatning Rocks; the Pilots therefore ſee the Quickſands, and prevent the Danger.

Romani ſedendo vincunt, was the old Proverb; the antient Romans defended themſelves from the Craft

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and Power of their Enemies; they alſo extended their Dominion, and made their Name rever'd in remote places, more by the Prudence of their Counſels, than by the Valour of their Armies.

And what mighty antient and powerful States and Kingdoms have been broken and overthrown either by neglect of Counſel, or by precipitate and immature Advice?

Counſel and Strength are the main Pillars that bear up a Government, yet the former ſeemeth to have the Preheminence. A good Head ſurpaſſeth a ſtrong Arm, yet in as much as Counſel doth but chalk out the way to Action, it requireth a ſtrong Arm; and when theſe two happily conjoin in the ſame Service, what Wonders do they produce?

Underſtanding finds out the Matter to be done, Counſel, Reaſon and Debate provide and fit Means proper thereunto; then Wiſdom undertakes the managing of thoſe Means, and by the help of Strength in due time the deſired End is obtain'd.

In ſhort, it was by the grave Advice of Parliament that our gracious King firſt condeſcended to enter into this preſent War; and if it pleaſe God to aſſiſt the Wiſdom of this preſent Parliament, and to direct and bleſs their Conſultations, he may

it were not therefore amiſs that we all pray'd this day, to morrow, and every day, that God would bleſs the Conſultations of the Parliament.

The wiſe Man aſſures us from his own Experience, that had we nothing elſe to condole or dread, to look for or prepare againſt, yet the very War wherein we are ſo much concern'd requires more than ordinary Counſel, *Prov.* 11. 14. Counſel and Strength are neceſſary for the War: for in a War with ambitious and bloody, with cruel and barbarous, with falſe and perfidious Enemies, whoſe Power is not eaſily reſiſted, and whoſe Faith is not to be credited, we have need of able Counſellors.

Hear we him again, *Prov.* 15. 22. *Without Counſel Purpoſes are diſappointed; but in the multitude of Counſellours they are eſtabliſhed.* So again, *Prov.* 20. 18. *Every Purpoſe is eſtabliſhed by Counſel.* Wiſe and faithful Counſellours ſit at the Helm like Pilots guiding the Ship, ſo that it may paſs with Eaſe through the roughest Waves, and with Safety by the threatning Rocks; the Pilots therefore ſee the Quickſands, and prevent the Danger.

Romani ſedendo vincunt, was the old Proverb; the antient Romans defended themſelves from the Craft

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and Power of their Enemies; they alſo extended their Dominion, and made their Name rever'd in remote places, more by the Prudence of their Counſels, than by the Valour of their Armies.

And what mighty antient and powerful States and Kingdoms have been broken and overthrown either by neglect of Counſel, or by precipitate and immature Advice?

Counſel and Strength are the main Pillars that bear up a Government, yet the former ſeemeth to have the Preheminence. A good Head ſurpaſſeth a ſtrong Arm, yet in as much as Counſel doth but chalk out the way to Action, it requireth a ſtrong Arm; and when theſe two happily conjoin in the ſame Service, what Wonders do they produce?

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make an happy end thereof, ſooner than they expect, who preſume to ſay it is not yet begun.

2. Another Reaſon prompting us to comply with this Day's Order, and to pray for Counſel for this preſent Parliament is, Counſel is the Gift of God.

It muſt be confeſt, that the Majeſty of the Prince, the Fidelity and Wiſdom of his Counſellors, the Prudence and Juſtice of his Judges, and the Valour of his Souldiers, are great Supports to a Nation; yet unleſs God affords his Counſel to every one of them in their reſpective places, theſe will totter and fall, and come to a fearful end: Convenient is it therefore that we who muſt otherwiſe ſuffer in the common Ruine, be zealous at the Throne of Grace ſuing for Divine Wiſdom and Counſel to aid them in time of need; for it is he that gives Wiſdom to the Head, Courage to the Heart, and Strength to the Hands.

Thus wiſe *Solomon* inſtructs us; *Prov.* 16. 1. *The Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the Anſwer of the Tongue, is from the Lord*: So that the wiſeſt Man hath neither the Ability of deviſing what is fit and proper, nor yet of uttering what he ſo finds deviſed, till he hath received it from God; nor are

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ſuch precious Talents entruſted with all Perſons indifferently; *Eccleſ.* 2. 26. *God giveth to a Man that is good in his ſight, Wiſdom and Knowledg.*

We are taught, *James* 1. 17. that *every good and perfect Gift cometh from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*; who if he ſees fit to ſuſpend his Light, the ſharpeſt Wits, the moſt acute Judgments grope but in the dark.

That God ſhould be the Fountain of Wiſdom and Knowledg, is a Principle all have aſſented to: for even the very Heathen in all their Diſtreſs did uſually apply unto their Gods for Direction and Help. Nor are we left without ſufficient Precedents of this nature, *Judg.* 18. 5. five Perſons of the Tribe of *Dan*, Men of Valour, were ſent out as Spies, they confided not in their own Policy or Strength, but like wiſe Perſons, deſirous to diſcharge their Truſt effectually, they ask Counſel of the Lord, whether the way they had deſign'd to go ſhould proſper? it was their Belief that God only knew, and it was their Reſolution to follow his Direction.

Again, *Jugd.* 20. 18. *Iſrael* being to engage with the Tribe of *Benjamin*, relied not upon their Numbers, for they had often ſeen that the Battel was

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not to the Strong, but truſted in the Counſel they ſhould receive from God, and therefore before the Battel was begun, *went up to the Houſe of God, and asked Counſel of God.*

Let others therefore look to their *Achitophel*, *Machiavel*, *Anaxagoras*, *Panætius* or *Polybius*, or to the Conclave of *Babylon*; yet let your Eyes look up unto the Lord, and beg hard for the Wiſdom which is pure and peaceable, and then ſhall your Enemies by their ſitting hatch but a Cockatrice Egg, or ſpin a Spider's Web; God will fruſtrate their Devices and make their craftieſt Projects of none effect, while your own Counſellors ſhall be guided in the ways of Peace and Happineſs.

Pray to God; for he hath aſſur'd you, *Prov.* 8. 14. that Counſel, ſound Wiſdom, Underſtanding and Strength are his; vain and fruitleſs Devices the Devil may furniſh his Inſtruments with, but ſound Counſel and Wiſdom is only from the Lord.

3. Pray to God heartily that he would give the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding to the Honourable Houſes of Parliament, for God hath promiſed upon our praying to beſtow this Bleſſing.

Hear how our Saviour reaſons with the Jews, *Luke* 11. 11. they had been poiſon'd by entertaining

ing ſome falſe Notions of God, and were jealous of him in reſpect of his Love and Bounty: to them our Saviour ſaith, if you that are raſh, fiery and inconſiderate Creatures, ſubject to ſundry Paſſions and Humours, have notwithſtanding that Affection for your Children that you gratify them in what they ask, provided it be uſeful and good to them, why then ſhould not your heavenly Father, the God of Love and Mercy, who is not ſubject to thoſe Diſtractions and Changes which are incident to Fleſh and Blood, moſt freely give you the beſt things, even the Spirit of Wiſdom, provided you ask as you ought? if therefore we ask, they ſhall receive.

For our farther Encouragement, St. *James* from God hath told us, *James* 1. 17. that if any Man lacketh Wiſdom, he ſhould ask it of God, *who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not.* Fear no Reproach for asking, your Petition ſhall not be thrown out, provided it be delivered with Faith, Humility and Fervency; you ſhall not be brow-beaten for thus addreſſing, but you may believe, that he who hath told us he loveth a cheerful Giver, is himſelf a liberal Benefactor.

Solomon:

Solomon being called to the Throne, wiſely conſidered the Weight of a Scepter, and the Cares of a Crown, and therefore in his firſt Petition that he made to God, 1 *Kings* 3. 9. he beg'd an underſtanding Heart, Counſel and Direction from God, to go in and out before ſo great a People, that he might exert his Power to the right ends, *viz.* God's Glory, and his Subjects Good. And if you read 1 *Kings* 4. 29, 30. God both heard and was well pleaſed with this Prayer; he denied him not the Requeſt of his Lips, but gave him ſuch a meaſure of Knowledg, ſuch a Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, that he thereby ſurpaſſed even to a wonder all his Contemporaries, whether Friends or Foes.

Daniel and his three Companions made their Supplication before God for Wiſdom, they were in a difficult Poſt, living in the midſt of their Enemies, and therefore needed Direction, leſt unhappily they gave occaſion that the Name of God ſhould be blaſphemed; their Prayer was anſwered, *Dan.* 1. 17. and notwithſtanding they were but as Children for Years, they became wiſer than the Aged.

Thirdly. To what ends we ſhould thus Pray.

The great ends why we ſhould pray for *Counſel* and *Wiſdom* for theſe our *Repreſentatives*, we may find in the Prayer that the *Church* hath ſet out upon this particular occaſion, namely, that by their *Conſultations* Good may accrue to the *Church of God*; Safety, Honour and Welfare may be Eſtabliſhed to the *King and His Kingdoms*; and that all things may be ſo ordered and ſettled by their Endeavours upon the Beſt and Sureſt Foundations, that Peace and Happineſs, Truth and Juſtice, Religion and Piety may be Eſtabliſhed among us for all Generations. And what can any Man deſire more than that the *Church of God may flouriſh* by means of true *Religion* and *Piety*; that the King's Honour and Safety, and His Kingdoms Welfare may be preſerved by the upholding Truth, and executing of Juſtice? and theſe things thus happily Atchieved (by God's Bleſſing upon their Counſels) How Peaceful, how Happy ſhall we and our Poſterity be?

1. One great end is for the good of the *Church*, that by means of their Godly Wiſdom,

Religion and Piety may flouriſh among us: Religion and Piety, that is, Soundneſs of Doctrine, and Holineſs of Converſation.

As to the Firſt, that of Doctrine, the un-erring Rule thereof is the Scriptures, which, if duly obſerved, Hereſies and Schiſms would vaniſh from among us: not but that either of theſe pretend Scripture in their Juſtification, yet both are not ſound in the Expoſition of them: and the diſtinction were eaſily made, if Men would depart from their Pride and Conceitedneſs, and with Modeſty compare Scripture with Scripture, and where after ſuch compariſon, the Truth doth not ſo fully appear as might be wiſh'd, they would then ask Judgment of thoſe Reverend Fathers of the Church, whoſe Piety and Learning have paſſed without juſt contradiction for many Ages.

Chryſippus doating on his own Learning and Subtilty in Diſpute, boaſted, that he oftner wanted new Opinions, than Arguments to defend them: we have of late days heard of ſome of his Scholars.

It was the Opinion of ſome exemplary for Knowledge as well as Piety, that Religion had

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but Three Grand Enemies, *Luke-warmneſs*, *Prophaneneſs*, and *Novelty*: with the firſt we have been a long time peſter'd; by the ſecond never ſo much as of late, and that has made way for the other of Novelty: and it ſeems a juſt conſequence; for ſeeing True Religion is ſo much out of Faſhion, ſome have thought it the moſt opportune time to ſhut it quite out of the World, ours at leaſt, and have therefore boldly, by Novel Opinions, ſtruck at Two of the Fundamental Points thereof; the Sacrifice of *Chriſt's* death, denying it to be Meritorious, and Confounding inſtead of Explaining the Myſtery of the Glorious Trinity, making too fair a way for Polytheiſme; this ſo quietly hitherto ſuffered, and conniv'd at, (for if ſome had not Slept, others had not had Opportunity to Sow theſe Tares) hath encourag'd another to attempt the Whole Body of *Chriſtianity*, denying any thing therein to be Myſterious.

Need we have to Pray, that God would Inſpire with his Heavenly Wiſdom them that Sit at the Helm, leaſt ſuch Hurricanes ariſing, the Ship of the *CHURCH* be Over-ſet, and Religi-

on, as to the Doctrinal Part, be loſt in the Storm. As much need of help hath the Practical part Religion and Piety, I mean holineſs of life; And how ſhall we be holpen unleſs it ſhall pleaſe God to direct thoſe, to whom he hath given the Power, to be careful that the Wholſome Laws already made be put in due Execution, and to prepare others to Curb and Reſtrain Wickedneſs and Vice.

We lie under a biting Sarcaſme (I wiſh I could ſay Slander) that none are more wiſe in deviſing Laws than the *Engliſh*, but every one exceeds them in the Execution: Sin would not be ſo fearleſs, did ſome preſent Puniſhment remind the Sinner of Eternal; time was that Men dare not but appear ſomething towardly and good, but now they are paſſed all *Hypocriſie*, and are come up to down-right *Impudence*: they declare their Sin as *Sodom*, they hide it not. The Conſtable, the Church-warden, the Juſtice, and who not ſees it or hears it, and who ſees it, ſo ſafe they are, they care not: If I may ſpeak, my fear it is this, that unleſs they, for whom we this Day are to Pray, do, by the help of God's Grace,

Suppreſs

Suppreſs the Prophaneſs, Pride, Drunkenneſs, Luſt, Swearing, Forſwearing and Sabbath breaking, ſo rife among us, there will in a ſhort time be but a little, if any true Church in theſe Three Nations.

2. Wee thus pray for Counſell for our Senatours, for the good of the State, that for the Kings Honour, and his Kingdoms Welfare, they would ſee to the maintaining Truth, and executing Juſtice.

Words can have no greater ornament than truth, 'tis not ſo much Rethorick or Elegancy of Language that does Beautifie our diſcourſe, as Verity and plainneſs; and yet now this great beauty is out of Favour, not but that Men may ſpeak truth, for many ſay King *William* is our King, and that he ought to be obeyed in all his lawful commands, yet divers ſpeak this truth, but as *Judas* ſpoke of Charity, to ſerve their intereſt; not that they account it a truth, for it is apparent, that ſome who ſay ſo with their Tongues, yet reſerve Rancour, Malice and Revenge in their Hearts, which at particular times and places break forth at their lips. Others are Forgers of Lyes, they calumniate the Perſon and Majeſty, or elſe miſrepreſent the Actions of our Sovereign (who were he not as Good, as Great, they long ere this had had no breath to ſpeak with) by this means ſeeking to rend the hearts of his Subjects

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from him: Now what ſuch falſe Tongues deſerve, *David* who was ſufficiently perſecuted by them declares, *Pſal.* 120. 4. *Sharp Arrows of the Mighty with Coals of Juniper. Juniper* burns extraordinary fierce, and extraordinary puniſhment ſuch Perſons deſerve, and if once *Davids* Worthies would ſee good to command it, this would not only conduce much to the Honour and Safety of *David*, but leave a Fragrant ſmell ariſing thence, which would cheriſh the hearts of all that truly Serve God and Honour the King.

Beſides this publick truth of unfeigned love and Loyalty that ought to be perſonal for the honour and ſafety of his Majeſty the head of the State, there is alſo a private truth, for want whereof the body of the State ſuffers in its Welfare.

How common is Lying, Perjury, Forſwaring and Forgerys from common diſcourſe, Truth ſeems in a manner quite exploded, and nothing more frequent than Lying, and Banter, and that for the ſake of Merriment, and therefore as *Solon* once told *Theſpis*, ſo we now find it, Men have practiſed lying ſo long for ſport, that at laſt they are become earneſt at it; and therefore we find it in Promiſes and Covenants, and in matters of Trade, Lying, Fraud and Deceit, which are but other names for the ſame thing are ſo cuſtomary, that one would judg it were

a Proverb of *Solomons*, *That plain dealing ſhould dye a Beggar*: What Nation can entertain a good opinion or ſeek a correſpondence with a State thus habituated?

As for Juſtice, we may with *Jeremy*, Jere. 5. 7. *Run to and fro thro' the ſtreets of Cyties, and alſo into the Country Villages to find one that profeſſeth it*: One Juſt to God, Juſt to *Cæſar*, Juſt to his Neighbour, and Juſt to Himſelf is hard to find; how often have we heard that Juſtice hath not only ſhun'd the common converſation, but hath deſerted the very perſons and places of its uſual abode?

Let one great in Power, or mighty in Wealth, tranſgreſs a Law, provided it be that of Swearing, that of Drunkenneſs, that of Sabath breaking, or, that of Murder or Adultry; nay, all theſe and any other, yet where is the Wretch who dare be ſo hardy as to teſtifie the truth, or if ſuch be to be found, it will be long ere we can find a Magiſtrate will hear him, ſo as to execute his Office and diſcharge his Conſcience, *Pollio* careth for none of theſe things, *Fiat Juſtitia ruat cælum* is gone hence. The fear of the Miniſter of Juſtice is often times the ſecurity of the offender, or if he is not the Son of Fear, he is the Child of Hope, and a Reward in expectation can mitigate the Severity of the Law, or at leaſt cool his Zeal, and by ſuch means what ſhall become of Juſtice?

Need

Need have we therefore to pray that God would Counsel our Counsellors to be zealous in maintaining Truth and Justice, as well as Religion and Piety.

To Conclude;

Your Eyes are upon the Parliament, you watch the doors of their houses, you gladly get into their Company, you consult their Votes, and all to be acquainted with what they are doing or, intend to do for your good, this argues you have a great dependance upon their Councels; lift up therefore your hearts and voices to God, and assist them and your selves by your devout prayers; and when God in his mercy shall hear these prayers, then shall Peace and happiness dwell among us, then God will be at Peace with us, and he will either confound or force our Enemies to a Peace, then shall we be happy every way, then shall we be happy in our Country, in our King, in our Laws, in Mutual Love and Concord, then shall we have such a Peace as though we may differ in Judgment, yet we shall Assent in Affection; which happy and peaceful days God, vouchsafe to bestow upon us, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory, now and forever, *Amen.*

FINIS.

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